



OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AFFAIRS (ORBA) WEEKLY REPORT: October 11 – 18, 2017

ISSUES OF NOTE

MEETING OF THE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (CEC): - Acting Assistant Administrator Jane Nishida, Alternate Representative to the Council for the Commission on Environmental Cooperation (CEC), hosted and chaired a meeting of the Alternate Representatives from Canada and Mexico, the CEC Secretariat, and the Chair of the CEC Joint Public Advisory Committee. The meeting focused on key strategic topics:

- Planning for CEC Council Session 2018, to be hosted by Administrator Pruitt, Council Chair, with the theme of "Innovations and Partnerships for Green Growth" and proposed for June 26-27, 2018 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma;
- Taking stock of the CEC institution--its mandate, core mission, successes and challenges over the last 23 years;
- Improving CEC to continue to achieve the objectives of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) through value-added actions and results focused on target audiences and environmental protection in the context of trade and environment;
- Evaluation of CEC budget scenarios driven by potential adjustments in Party contributions;
- Design and planning for the Youth Innovation Challenge 2018;
- Process to update membership in the trilateral Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group. [Troche]

EPA AND USAID MEET WITH VIETNAM TO DISCUSS COLLABORATION ON DIOXIN REMEDIATION:

- On Monday October 16th, EPA (ORD and OITA) and USAID met with the Vice Minister of the Vietnam Ministry of National Defense (MND) to discuss war legacy issues, with a strong focus on the dioxin cleanup project in Bien Hoa Airbase in Vietnam.
- This meeting followed on two recent U.S.-Vietnam engagements: (1) the May 31st meeting between the Vietnamese Prime Minister and the President, in which they issued a joint statement committing to working together to address war legacy issues, including completing dioxin remediation at Da Nang Airport and intent to discuss

continued collaboration at Bien Hoa Airport; and (2) a June 5th staff-level meeting between EPA and MND regarding dioxin remediation at Da Nang and Bien Hoa.

- During the meeting, MND made several requests of the USG: 1) to work together to showcase and celebrate the successes of dioxin remediation at Da Nang airport; 2) to move forward with U.S.-Vietnam collaboration for dioxin remediation at Bien Hoa airbase; 3) to provide EPA support to build the capacity of MND's National Center for Remediation; 4) to develop a 3-year plan on addressing unexploded ordnances (UXOs); 5) increase international outreach on showcasing the U.S.-Vietnam partnership. EPA and USAID agreed to consult with our relevant partner agencies on all of these areas. [Kasat, Doroski, Kasman]

EPA MEETS WITH VIETNAM MONRE TO DISCUSS RECENT CALCULATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES WORKSHOP:

- On Monday, October 16th, EPA (OITA and EAB) met with Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to debrief from an EPA-MONRE August 2017 workshop on compensation for environmental damages and to discuss next steps.
- MONRE noted three areas of interest from the workshop: (1) how to calculate natural resource damages; (2) industry responsibility to demonstrate compliance; and (3) rehabilitation plans using the "polluter pays" principle.
- Based on the discussions during this workshop and on other ongoing environmental law revisions, MONRE plans to revise its decree on enviro compensation in 2019. MONRE requested EPA support in 2018 to review the current decree and to work with Vietnam counterparts to develop a proposal for the new decree.
- This technical assistance helps implement EPA's interagency agreement with State Department to support strong environmental governance policies and procedures in Vietnam in support of the increasing trade relationship. [Kasat]

MEETING WITH TAIWAN DIRECTOR GENERAL ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

- ORBA Director Mark Kasman met with Environmental Protection Administration-Taiwan's (EPAT) Tsung Yung Liu, Director General, Department of Comprehensive Planning on October 18 in Washington DC.
- DG Liu was in Washington to attend a Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP) workshop.
- This meeting was held after the workshop to discuss ongoing environmental education programming under the International Environmental Partnership (IEP) supported by EPAT and EPA.
- Proposals were presented for EPAT's consideration for continued and additional funding for environmental education programs including the GEEP and Eco-Campus Partnerships and looking for ways for the GEEP to support other IEP programs such as on e-waste and circular economy.
- Priority setting for future cooperation on environmental education will be further advanced by OITA Acting Assistant Administrator Jane Nishida's November visit to Taiwan. [Harris, Novikoff, Guen-Murray]

2017 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING:

- The 2017 meeting of the Global Environmental Education Partnership met in Washington DC on October 16 and 17th.
- GEEP is a program of Taiwan's International Environmental Partnership Program which is focused on building capacity in environmental education around the world using the power of education to help address global environmental problem.
- The meeting, co-chaired by EPA, the North America Association for Environmental Education and EPA Taiwan focused on a Call for Action and how GEEP can begin connecting with the 70+ environmental education (EE) networks across North & South America, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Middle East.
- The Call for Action consists of 10 draft actions which propose key priorities for the field of EE for the next decade. Taiwan authorities plan to advance the work of GEEP among Taiwan stakeholders and funders during the upcoming visit of Acting Assistant Administration Jane Nishida to Taiwan.
- GEEP is among the key IEP initiatives Taiwan environment Minister Lee Ying-yuan highlighted during his meeting with Administrator Pruitt at EPA last month. Taiwan stakeholders are expected to commit more than \$1 million to global EE programming over the next year. [Harris, Novikoff, Guen-Murray]

2017 U.S.-CHINA EcoPARTNERSHIPS ANNOUNCED:

- Three new U.S. – China EcoPartnerships for 2017 were announced on October 13.
- The U.S. co-sponsors the program to facilitate environmental and energy partnerships between the U.S. and China experts and innovators, mobilizing private sector investment and leveraged capital into innovative solutions. EPA serves on the panel that reviews and scores applications.
- Louisiana State University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences will work together on conservation and management of wetlands through joint data collection and analysis.
- Capstone Turbine and BROAD Air Conditioning will develop combined cooling-heating power systems to improve energy efficiency in buildings.
- The National Resource Defense Council and Shenzhen Power Supply Bureau will work together on a project that addresses energy demand, grid planning, and integration of renewable energy into power grids.
- Additional information about the 2017 selectees can be found at: <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274791.htm> [Novikoff]

POTUS TRIP TO ASIA AND DEFERMENT OF TRAVEL TO BEIJING:

- The White House on October 16 announced timeframe for POTUS travel to Asia in November 2017. After a visit to Hawaii on November 3, the President will visit Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.
- More information about the trip can be found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/10/16/statement-press-secretary-president-donald-j-trumps-upcoming-travel-asia>
- Embassy Beijing has requested that non-essential travel to Beijing during the period of October 23 – November 12 be deferred. This includes all official travelers not

directly involved in the official visit. Travel that cannot be deferred will be subject to a higher level of embassy scrutiny and clearance.

- The Embassy has been clearing trips where the official work starts on November 13.
- Other embassy posts in affected cities have not issued any restrictions or deferment requests at this point, though it is possible they could. [Novikoff]

OFFICE OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS AND POLICY

October 19, 2017



Meeting with UN Environment Economics Division Director

EPA Acting Assistant Administrator Jane Nishida hosted a meeting with State Department and UN Environment staff for UN Environment Economics Division Director Dr. Ligia Noronha. Dr. Noronha gave an overview of the restructured Economy Division and current priorities of the Division. Acting AA Nishida and Acting DOS Bart Putney from State Department gave an overview of US priorities in relevant areas. Participants then discussed more specifics of joint work on mercury, air pollution and preparations for the third UN Environment Assembly, including the parallel sustainable innovation expo. [Nishida, Smith, Bailey, Finman, Bandemehr, Besch]

United Nations Environment Lead Paint Project Planning Meeting

Last week EPA participated in a planning meeting for a UN Environment Lead Project funded by the Global Environment Facility. The meeting was attended by UN Environment, the World Health Organization, industry and environmental NGO representatives, the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, and UN Cleaner Production Centers. Participants discussed needed actions to meet the project goal of establishing lead paint laws in 40 countries. Project components include working with small businesses to showcase best practices to use lead-free paint additives, raising awareness of consumers and policymakers, and providing a model law to help countries develop their own laws. The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (Lead Paint Alliance) has created many tools that will be used in this project, including a Model Law and Guide to Establishing Lead Paint Laws, a Global Status Update of Laws, an on-line toolkit of resources and many more. EPA is the Chair of the Alliance and helped create all of these tools. The meeting provided UN Environment with concrete actions and target countries that will inform the project proposal going forward. EPA will be part of Project Steering Committee to help guide the project as it is implemented. [Smith, Bandemehr]

Interagency Meeting to Prepare for the Third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA3)

Representatives from EPA (OITA, OW), NOAA and USUN Nairobi attended a State Department hosted meeting on preparations for the third UN Environment Assembly. The group discussed logistical matters including the processes for delegation accreditation, an overall goal statement for the meeting, outreach plans and the timeline leading up to the December meeting. USUN Nairobi gave a readout from recent conversations in the committee of permanent representatives, which is discussing submitted resolutions, including on the US proposed lead

paint resolution, which was generally supported. In addition, the group discussed the background document for UNEA3, the US proposed water quality resolution, the proposed ministerial outcome declaration, UNEA3 side events and potential pledges for governments, civil society and the private sector. [Finman, Besch]

USG Breakfast Roundtable on International Technical Cooperation

OITA attended an interagency roundtable to discuss technical cooperation initiatives among a broad group of USG representatives. Participants from DOJ, FCC, DOI, OPIC, USAID, FBI, USTDA, DOC, and EPA, among others, participated in the discussion. Attendees briefed the larger group about the type of international technical cooperation activities in which their respective agencies were engaged. The discussion then turned more free flowing and participants brainstormed ways the USG could leverage its collective efforts for more effective interventions. The meeting resulted in a productive dialogue between the interagency participants and participants agreed to have such meetings on a regular basis to touch base and enhance the efficacy of the USG's international work. [Dieu, Harrington]

Meeting on Air Quality at the UN Environment Assembly

This week EPA convened partners from UN Environment and State Department to discuss the UN Environment Sustainability Expo, taking place on the margins of the third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA3) in December. UN Environment shared more information about the format of the expo and invited entities. The event will focus on showcasing innovation and solutions to environmental challenges, including technology to help us move “towards a pollution free planet” – the theme of UNEA3. In addition to booths there will be an open networking space organized to encourage informal conversations and dialogue among government officials, private sector representatives and academics attending the conference. The Expo could be a space where the US private sector and experts share information on their environmental technologies and best practices to reduce pollution. [Finman, Besch, Rourke]

EPA Provides Feedback to Norway’s Proposed Marine Litter Resolution for the Third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA3)

This week EPA worked with NOAA and State Department to provide feedback on Norway’s proposed Marine Litter resolution for UNEA3, which will be discussed this week by the committee of permanent representatives in Nairobi. The resolution references a recently released report on combating marine litter and microplastics, requested at UNEA2. NOAA led a call to discuss the US position on the draft resolution and drafted initial points to raise. EPA provided context for the ongoing discussion on marine litter within UNEAs and provided input on the draft points, which were finalized by State Department. The three agencies will closely coordinate to respond to future drafts and finalize positions on the resolution in preparation for the December UNEA3 meeting. [Smith, Finman, Besch, Adrian, Horan]

2018 Global Mercury Assessment

OITA coordinated EPA’s review and response of the draft Technical Assessment for UN Environment’s 2018 Global Mercury Assessment (GMA). The Technical Assessment is a joint effort by the Arctic Monitoring Assessment Program and the UN Environment Program, and was published in 2002, 2008, and 2013. The Technical Assessment is a compilation and analysis of the best available information on the fate and transport of mercury in the environment and is

based on submissions from governments and scientific research by international organizations and local, national and regional scientific institutions. The draft report includes sections on global emission of mercury to the atmosphere from anthropogenic sources, levels of mercury in the air, the relationship between trends in atmospheric mercury and mercury in aquatic biota, and mercury levels and trends in human populations worldwide. [Bailey, Ankrah, Marzouk, Schiffman]

Preparations for UN Environment Assembly and Science-Policy-Business Forum

Representatives from OITA, OAR, State Department and the World Bank held a conference call with the UN Environment Program (UNEP) to discuss preparations for the 3rd UN Environment Assembly this December and the preceding Science-Policy-Business (SPB) Forum. In addition to the SPB Forum session on air quality that EPA and the World Bank are organizing, UNEP officials are requesting that U.S. academics, government officials, and business leaders speak in sessions on additional issues. OITA also coordinated EPA comments on draft air quality resolutions submitted by Sudan and a group of African nations, for consideration at UNEA3. [Finman, Besch, Muehling, Rourke]

2017 Federal Employee Benefits Survey

On October 17, the Office of Personnel Management will be administering the 2017 Federal Employee Benefits Survey to a random sample of employees across government. The survey will be available for approximately four weeks.

The FEBS was last administered in 2015 and it focuses on measuring the importance, adequacy and value of employee benefits. The FEBS will also help to evaluate whether or not Federal employees understand the flexibilities and benefits available to them. Additionally, due to the ongoing focus on health and wellness programs across all Federal agencies, the survey will capture information regarding employee tobacco use and health demographics.

Approximately 40,000 full-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees (approximately 321 from the Environmental Protection Agency) will be randomly selected to participate across the entire government workforce. Each sampled employee will receive the survey via email. To streamline efforts and reduce the burden on agency points of contact, OPM has used the email addresses previously collected from each agency for the administration of the 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

Questions about the survey can be directed to Lauren.Sobek@opm.gov.

Prescription Drug Take-back Day

The EPA will collect unwanted or expired prescription drugs in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative on **Wednesday, October 25, 2017**, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. EPA employees can bring unwanted or expired prescription drugs to the Ronald Reagan Building Health Unit, room G1-20, or the Potomac Yard Health Unit, room S-1400, for safe, free, and anonymous disposal.

The DEA's initiative seeks to prevent prescription drug abuse and theft by ridding homes of expired or unwanted medications. For more information about prescription drug disposal, visit the EPA Intranet.

If you have any questions, please contact [SeVera Wilson](#) at (202) 564-0097.

4 trips are scheduled for this report period by EPA senior managers.

Jane Nishida 10/25/2017
Acting Asst. Administrator
Destinations: CANADA - OTTAWA
Meeting: Canada Travel

Jane Nishida 11/6/2017
Acting Asst. Administrator
Destinations: TAIWAN - TAIPEI
Meeting: Taiwan Mission

Nancy Beck 11/07/2017
Deputy Asst. Administrator
Destinations: TAIWAN - TAIPEI
Meeting: Taiwan, EPA International Chemical Management Conference

Nancy Beck 11/13/2017
Deputy Asst. Administrator
Destinations: JAPAN - TOKYO CITY
Meeting: Seminar & Workshop on the Latest Trends in Chemical Substances
Management